of information relating to the progress in use of Official Languages in various States and Central Govt. Offices, as also the difficulties being faced in this regard, will help in finding out the problems and solutions therefor.

It was accepted in the conference that work in the States is being done in their Official Languages. It was opined in the conference that in addition to translation work, most of the original work should be done in their Official Languages.

In pursuance to the provisions contained in Article 345 and 210, of the Constitution, various States Govts. have granted official language status to one or more language for their States.

Under Article 343(1) of the Constitution, Hindi in Devnagri Script is the Official Language of the Union. English language shall continue to be used till official language Hindi take its place. Therefore, there is no justification in remaining the Deptt. of Official Language as Deptt. of Official Languages.

Citizenship rights to Chakmas

*217. SHRI B.P. SINGHAL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the President, General Secretary, Co-ordination Secretary and Assistant General Secretary of the Committee for Citizenship Rights on Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh gave a joint petition dated 12th November, 1998, to the Home Minister;

(b) if so, what action has been taken on that petition;

(c) what corrective steps the State Government and the Central Government are taking to grant citizenship to Chakmas, in compliance with the Supreme Court direction of 9th January, 1996; and

(d) what are the reasons for non-compliance of Supreme Court decision till today?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The Government is already seized of the matter relating to grant of citizenship rights to the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh. The Government of Arunachal Pradesh has been asked to ensure that necessary steps are taken to honour the Supreme Court judgement in letter and spirit. 258 citizenship applications received directly by the Central Government have been sent to the State Government for further necessary action. However, there has been a delay in furnishing of verified reports by the State Government agencies. Besides, a majority of the refugees have, reportedly, not submitted their citizenship applications so far.

Parallel courts in West Bengal

*218. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether parallel courts are functioning in the West Bengal and are handing down unusually harsh sentences on defenceless people of their own faith; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken to impress upon the State Government to enforce the rule of law and protect weaker sections from this exploitation?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) and (b) According to information received from the Government of West Bengal, only one case has come to notice in which the father of a woman (Ms. Hera Khatun) who had divorced her husband was asked to pay a fine of Rs. 70,000/- on the ground that such divorce was not permitted under Muslim laws. This case was reported from Murshidabad District. The decision to impose the fine was taken by local Muslims on 2.8.1998. The father of Ms. Khatun is reported to have paid a sum of Rs. 10,000/-, which is said to be in the nature of a "Village Salisi". On the complaint of Ms. Khatun, a case was registered against nine persons, out of whom three have been arrested.

Indo-French joint military exercises

*219. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM:
SHRI ABANI ROY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and France have agreed to conduct joint military exercises and to hold second meeting of the Indo-French high level committee on defence cooperation;